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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

15 January 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR\*

SUBJECT: Soviet Response to US Middle East Policy Declaration

1. The USSR has for some time been following an active policy in the Middle East and has energetically exploited the broadened opportunities resulting from the Anglo-French reverse at Suez. At present, the USSR probably believes: (a) the US policy declaration in and of itself is not likely to result very soon in any concrete arrangements with Middle East states which would call for drastic Soviet counteraction; (b) the declaration is vulnerable to propaganda attack.

2. Thus, the main Soviet response, at least initially, is likely to be a major propaganda effort to discredit the US move, and such an effort has already begun. The USSR will attempt to convince the countries of the Middle East and Asia that the US is (a) launching new aggressive militaristic policies which increase

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\* OOI has been consulted in the preparation of this paper.

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tensions and undermine the constructive role of the UN; and  
(b) attempting to save colonialism by itself taking over (to its own financial benefit) the privileged position which the UK and France were forced to relinquish. The particular targets of this campaign will be Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. The aim will be to dissuade their leaders, or to prevent them as a result of aroused popular emotions, from responding favorably to the US initiative.

3. The USSR will also continue those lines of action in which it was already engaged prior to the US declaration. These are aimed at denying the area to the influence of the Western Powers, breaking up the Baghdad Pact, and convincing other Middle East states (notably Jordan, Egypt, and Saudia Arabia) that cooperation with the US is unnecessary and unprofitable. These lines of action include:

- a. Economic and military aid to Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and Afghanistan, and continued efforts to press aid and trade offers on other Middle East states.
- b. Support of ultranationalist subversion against Middle East governments friendly to the West, in particular Iraq.

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- c. Diplomatic support and encouragement of Egyptian and Syrian intransigence and obstructionism on the Suez issue and on the reopening of pipelines.
- d. Similar encouragement to Egypt and Yemen to undermine the British position in the Persian Gulf-Arabian peninsula area.
- e. Strong diplomatic and propaganda support of the more extreme Arab aims against Israel.
- f. Diplomatic and propaganda support of India and Afghanistan in their disputes with Pakistan.

In the context of a developing response to the US declaration there may be an intensification of these Soviet efforts, particularly under (a) and (b) above. There are already indications of increased Soviet support to subversive elements in Iraq. As Egypt's economic difficulties mount, the USSR might make a large offer of financial aid.

4. As opportunities appear, or if the Soviet leaders conclude that there is a need for more drastic countermeasures against prospective successes of the new US policy, they may take

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additional steps in the area. These, although we consider them unlikely at present, could include:

- a. Encouragement of a Syrian-Egyptian takeover in Jordan.
  - b. Efforts to set up overt alliances, or more likely, nonaggression treaties, with Syria, Egypt, or Afghanistan.
  - c. Rapid large scale rearmament of Egypt and a marked step-up in present levels of military aid to Syria, including provision of substantial numbers of Soviet technical personnel.
  - d. A major UN initiative calling for settlement of the Suez and Palestine problems on Arab terms.
  - e. A formal offer of military support against a renewal of "colonialist aggression" in the area, in effect a parallel guarantee to that of the US.
5. Diversionary moves in other areas would also be a possible Soviet response. Actions of this kind might include:
- a. Encouraging a renewal of Chinese Communist military

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pressure in the Far East, at Macao, Hongkong, or the Off-Shore Islands.

- b. Actions in Germany, in particular affecting Berlin, which would have the effect of raising tensions in Europe.
- c. Dramatic diplomatic moves to reduce tensions, in the form possibly of new proposals on disarmament, Germany, and European security.

In general, however, we do not believe that the chances for any of these developments taking place have been increased by the US declaration on the Middle East.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

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